

FINAL THOUGHTS--1792 MORRIS SO-CALLED SILVER CENTER CENT

APRIL 29, 2020

As team leader of the research project that investigated the 1792 Morris So-Called Silver Center Cent, it is an honor to recognize those who contributed much in bringing this project to fruition. Since November 2017, the research team that includes Stuart Levine, Maureen Levine, and Tony Lopez conducted extensive research on the 1792 Morris specimen culminating in the publication of a fifty-page analysis on the Newman Numismatic Portal, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/538104>. The study's conclusion that the silver plug was inserted after striking and therefore not authentic, was publicly supported by twenty distinguished numismatic experts, <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/567273>. The *E-Sylum* also reported on our findings as our investigation progressed.

In order to gain a better understanding of how the Morris So-Called Silver Center Cent was likely made and the amount of time that would have been required to accomplish the task, six Indian Head Cents were modified by inserting and hand-engraving a silver plug. Upon completion of our study, the six fabricated silver center cents were encapsulated and named after the respective recipients in acknowledgement of their efforts. Stuart and Maureen Levine received the #2 specimen; Tony Lopez #3; Jim Halperin, Co-Chairman, Heritage Auctions, #4; Ron Guth, founder of The Numismatic Detective Agency, #5; and, Ken Hopple, former Chief Coiner of the Carson City Mint, #6. I reserved the first specimen for myself after commissioning and paying for them to be made. The team very much appreciates the support it has received from the numismatic community.

However, it is a great disappointment to the team that neither Joe Orlando, President and Chief Executive Officer of Collectors Universe, Inc., nor Brett Charville, President of PCGS, would meet with us to discuss our Morris research findings. I also reached out to the Chairman of the Board of Collectors Universe, Inc., Mr. Bruce A. Stevens, and informed him that I had made an offer to contribute \$150,000, through an agent, to help a consortium purchase the coin from the owner and settle this issue at the lowest cost to PCGS. Although I bore no legal liability, I wanted to help resolve the issue for the betterment of the hobby. Additionally, I also offered to purchase the Morris coin from PCGS for \$150,000 and donate it to the American Numismatic Society (ANS), a possibility I had discussed with Ute Wartenberg Kagan, then Executive Director of the ANS. To help in securing a meeting with PCGS, I enlisted the aid of Joe O'Connor, a well-respected dealer. In my discussions with him, he asked if my offer of \$150,000 was still on the table and I responded yes. He suggested the idea of my acquiring it and then donating it to the ANS, which I said had already been discussed with them. Unfortunately, he too was unsuccessful in getting PCGS to accept our meeting request.

Given the lack of a positive response, on February 27, 2020, in a letter to Mr. Stevens, I rescinded my \$150,000 offer and, as a high-end collector, expressed my dismay at how this situation was handled by the company. All along, the team's goal was to achieve an appropriate solution that would serve the best interests of the hobby and all concerned.

One person who deserves special recognition is the engraver, Jeanne LaShelle, who crafted the Indian Head Silver Center Cents. Throughout this process, I was restricted from disclosing her identity for security reasons. After reviewing our research and seeing the recognition it was receiving, she lifted this restriction at the Reno Coin Club meeting where I presented Ken Hopple with his specimen. Jeanne, who is very modest, is a dedicated and talented artist and has won recognition for her engraving. We believe the quality of her work speaks for itself.

With this final communication, it is now up to collectors and the industry to arrive at their own conclusion as to who has made the better argument. To date, we have never received any communication that details the PCGS position other than that they disagree with our conclusions. We believe we have provided a valuable service to the hobby.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Rodriguez

INDIAN HEAD SILVER CENTER CENT



TEAM MEMBERS



#1 RODRIGUEZ SPECIMEN



#2 LEVINE SPECIMEN



#3 LOPEZ SPECIMEN

VALUED CONTRIBUTORS



#4 HALPERIN SPECIMEN



#5 GUTH SPECIMEN



#6 HOPPLE SPECIMEN



KEN HOPPLE—JEANNE LaSHELLE